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CONVERSATION ON THE PRESS

By JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

"I'VE BEEN READING in the papers", said the missus to me at breakfast, "that this habit of smearing government servants is keeping bright young men from taking jobs in Washington."

"It's the bunk", I answered in my lordly male way.

"It's not the bunk", said the missus. "Let me quote you something from a newspaper column. It's about a Washington bigshot: 'His speech is symptomatic. . . . It is narrow and ungenerous. . . . Such men could no more be magnanimous than they could read Shakespeare. . . .' "

"That does sound rather nasty", I said. "But you haven't told me who is saying what about whom."

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"You don't know this columnist", said the missus. "Just listen to some more. He calls a member of the Tariff Commission a 'notorious' — well, I won't say what. And he lights out after an ex-Senator from a Western state as an 'irresponsible blatherskite'. He winds up his column by referring to an entire party as a 'collection of profiteers and pirates'."

"You're hiding something from me", I said. "Are you quoting someone on the Truman gang?"

"I'm not telling you yet", said the missus. "I just want to prove to you first that it's no canard, this charge that smearing is apt to keep good men out of government. Let me read you this item from a weekly magazine. I'll substitute X, Y and Z for the names involved. The magazine writer says: 'Mr. X's only visible qualifications for this vital job seem to be a slavish acceptance of the Y journalistic line.' He goes on to say that the X appointment 'synchronizes well with other appointments. . . . a Crown-Zellerbach paper executive from Seattle, Mr. Z, has succeeded the scholarly A as Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service'."

"Aha", I said. "You've tipped your mitt by mentioning Crown-Zellerbach. That's Big Business. You are quoting from a Leftist column in the first instance, and from a Leftist weekly in the second."

"It doesn't matter what or whom I quote", said the missus. "I've been proving to you that McCarthyism is a reality in this country. What I've been giving you are some real examples of name-calling and smearing, of invidious and contemptuous remarks about public officials. It's enough to keep anyone out of government service if he's to be called

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an 'irresponsible blatherskite' or a 'pirate' or a guy who 'slavishly accepts' someone's 'journalistic line'."

"Come clean", I said, "who is your McCarthyite columnist?"

"He's a man named Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.", said the missus, "and his column is from Jimmy Wechsler's *New York Post.* (You know Wechsler; he's the fellow who claims McCarthy has been smearing *him.*) The big shot politician to whom Schlesinger refers as a 'narrow and ungenerous man' who couldn't read Shakespeare is none other than George Humphrey, Secretary of the Treasury. The 'irresponsible blatherskite' is ex-Senator Harry Cain. The 'collection of profiteers and pirates' is the Eisenhower Administration."

"H'm", I said. "I wonder what Schlesinger would say if Joe McCarthy were to argue that Dean Acheson had been 'narrow and ungenerous' to Chiang Kai-shek, or if Senator Jenner were to speak of Professor Fairbank of Harvard as an 'irresponsible blatherskite' on the subject of John Carter Vincent's and Owen Lattimore's China Policy?"

"That's easy", said the missus. "He'd accuse McCarthy and Jenner of smearing government officials and scaring young men out of politics."

"And what about that weekly you were quoting from?" I asked.

"I was quoting from the good old *New Republic*", said the missus. "Mr. X is William C. Strand, the man who heads the Office of Territories in the Department of Interior. And the 'line' that he follows so slavishly isn't the *Daily Worker's,* it's Colonel McCormick's. It seems that Strand's great special sin is that he was once an executive city editor of the Washington *Times-Herald,* a Right-wing newspaper. As for the Crown-Zellerbach man mentioned in the *New Republic,* he's John L. Farley. His crime is that he's been a businessman."

"What you've proved to me", I said to the missus, "is that everybody in government gets criticized by someone. The Left slaps the Right and the Right slaps the Left, usually with no holds barred."

"Exactly", said the missus. "And why not? Are we breeding a race of panty-waists that can't take it when they're criticized? What I say is, let young men cultivate tougher hides. The motto for a politician — or a newspaper editor — should be: 'Even as I dish it out I can take it.' That might be a good Golden Rule to recommend to Jimmy Wechsler the next time he feels like crying because Joe McCarthy is after him. Jimmy is no creampuff artist when it comes to throwing the language around. Besides, he has white space at his disposal every day — and Joe McCarthy hasn't."

"You've touched a raw nerve", said I to the missus. "Politicians resent editors because they are at a disadvantage in fighting them. Every editor has a monopoly hold on his own white space."

"This question of monopoly", said the missus, "is something editors and publishers should approach with due humility. After all, what Senator can afford to finance a

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Right-wing competitor to the *New York Post* or the *Times?*"

"Do you imply", I asked, "that the *Times* is Left-wing?"

"Let the punishment fit the crime", said the missus. "I've just been reading Arthur Hays Sulzberger's speech on freedom in the April issue of the *Nieman Reports.* I don't say that Mr. Sulzberger is consciously Left-wing. But he's certainly naive — and that's something that no publisher of a paper like the *Times* can afford to be."

"Wherein do you specify the naiveté?" I asked.

"Well", said the missus, "Mr. Sulzberger weeps large tears over the plight of his book reviewers. 'Our book reviewers', he says, 'have had a particularly difficult time, because of the too general assumption that any anti-Communist book is automatically a good book'."

"That's a good one", I said. "The *Times* reviewers who have reviewed John T. Flynn and Freda Utley in recent years seem to have had little enough trouble assuming that anti-Communists in general are an ornery lot."

"Exactly", said the missus. "When Flynn was damning the wicked investment trusts in a column called 'Other People's Money', for the *New Republic,* he was considered a respectable journalist. The Scripps-Howard papers ran a syndicated column by Flynn in those days. *Collier's* used his stuff regularly. Doubleday-Doran and Simon and Schuster used to compete for the privilege of publishing his books. But when Flynn dared to take the unpopular side in an argument, he became a scaly fellow with horns."

"I notice that the *Times* reviewer of 'The Lattimore Story' last Sunday accused Mr. Flynn of entertaining a 'conspiratorial theory of history'," I said. "Does that mean that Mr. Flynn has changed his style of thinking since he ceased to be a good *New Republic* writer?"

"Mr. Flynn", said the missus, "has always been Mr. Flynn. He's a crusader who thinks the way to fight sin in the abstract is to expose sinners in the concrete. In the old days, when he was crusading for the enforcement of the Sherman Anti-trust Act, he didn't write articles condemning monopoly in general; he wrote articles condemning monopolists in particular. But he was always fair-minded. He wrote a whole book on John D. Rockefeller — I remember it, because you yourself reviewed it for the *Times* Sunday Book Review if I'm not mistaken. What he said about John D. Rockefeller's early tactics was certainly critical enough, but he had the fair-mindedness to admit that Standard Oil ceased long ago to be a monopoly."

"But", I said, "Owen Lattimore might be an innocent man."

"Mr. Flynn", said the missus, "doesn't argue whether he's innocent or guilty; he presents the evidence. You're just being provoking."

"I'll admit to that", I said. "Long before I ever heard of Joe McCarthy, I thought Owen Lattimore a conscious follower of the Communist line. He switched on Chiang Kai-shek when the Party switched on him. He called Syngman Rhee a 'little Chiang Kai-

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shek' when Rhee's only crime was that of being a Korean patriot. No, you can't sell Lattimore to me, and I doubt even that Mr. Sulzberger would buy him — or support a defense of him in his Sunday Book Review — if he'd ever take the trouble to read his books."

"What Mr. Sulzberger doesn't know", said the missus, "is that his Book Review practically made Mao Tse-tung the Chinese Jefferson. By praising Teddy White and Annalee Jacoby, Lawrence Rosinger, Mark Gayn, Anna Louise Strong, John Fairbank, Owen Lattimore and Edgar Snow whenever they wrote on China, the *Times* made Mao Tse-tung as respectable in American country club circles as Adolph Ochs himself."

"Well", said I, "I must confess the *Times* is a confusing proposition these days. I could forgive it for being wrong on the China issue if it would only have the grace to admit it was wrong. We can all make mistakes. But the real trouble with the *Times* is that it has become a newspaper for Park Avenue 'liberal' — or should I say McLiberal — consumption, not a newspaper for the broad American hinterlands."

"Wherein do *you* specify?" asked the missus.

"Take its stand on the tidelands oil issue", I said. "The *Times* used to be a Jeffersonian Democratic organ — meaning that it supported the philosophy of States' Rights. But it's become New York Hamiltonian in recent years. It's against giving the states title to oil land within the three or the ten mile limit."

"But that's the open sea", said the missus. "The *Times* is merely arguing that what is beyond low tide belongs to the people as a whole."

"Do you argue that way", I asked, "when you order lobster from that fish man who goes up to Maine every week?"

"What are you getting at?" asked the missus.

"I'm merely following the logic of the *Times*", I answered. "If Texas hasn't the right to oil within its historic coastal limits, then Maine hasn't the right to its lobsters."

"There's something fishy about this argument", said the missus.

"Okay", I said, "but there's also something oily about the *Times*. And when I say 'oily' I mean specious. All this stuff about the 'reign of terror' that it prints in its Sunday Magazine. I get mighty tired of hearing Bertrand Russell and Mr. Justice Douglas complaining that they can't speak out when all they have to do is ask editor Lester Markel for the privilege of addressing a million American readers in the Sunday Magazine. Anyone can complain about the alleged Rightest 'Reign of Terror' in the Sunday *Times*. But do you think Lester Markel would take an article from someone who had been hit by the Leftist terror in the Thirties and the early Forties? Would he take an article from Morrie Ryskind or Adolph Menjou about the Stalinist terror in Hollywood? Seriously, I doubt it."

"I doubt it, too", said the missus.

John Chamberlain, daily book columnist for the *New York Times,* 1933-36, has until recently been an editor of the *Freeman.*

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HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor* FRANK CHODOROV, *Associate Editor*

Vol. X, No. 22 Wednesday, June 3, 1953 Washington, D. C.

Taft's Week: Senator Taft never had so healthy an influence on the American political scene as he did last week when he spoke from a sickbed in Cincinnati. This is the verdict after a week of noisy repercussions and forensic strife about "isolationism", "going it alone", "appeasement", etc. Again, as many times in the past, Taft gave voice to American common sense in branding the UN as worse than useless in the Far Eastern imbroglio (indeed everywhere, many Taft admirers would say).

"We love him for the enemies he has made" — is a remark that came up again and again, as all the "liberal" pundits went at the Ohio Senator viciously on the morrow of his speech. Those who daily strive to split the GOP administration even managed to make Ike believe temporarily that Taft had said things he never said — which inspired some unfortunate statements by Ike. Fortunately, due to the Washington *Times-Herald* and daily columnist David Lawrence, this fog was quickly dispelled and party harmony was salvaged.

Other enemies than the crypto-Democrats in the press showed their hand. The *Daily Worker* last week tried to picture the foray as "cops-and-robbers", with Ike cast in the former role, Taft in the latter. This Communist interpretation bore a suspicious similarity to that of the "liberals" — a significant parallel which has not gone unnoticed here.

Other Senators spoke words of wisdom. Senator Jenner (Indiana) cut to the root of the matter: "Recognition of Red China is the only real barrier to a peace agreement in Korea. . . . The Communists haggle over 48,000 prisoners of war, so we will forget the 400 million Chinese prisoners of war we are to abandon for all time. The pro-Communists have followed this one objective of getting Red China recognized and installed in the UN ever since the fall of China." Senator Knowland (California) offered a resolution calling for the withdrawal of the United States from the UN and all its organs if Communist China is admitted to UN membership, or its representatives, the Red regime, are recognized as accredited agents of the Chinese Republic in the UN.

To many here, Taft, Jenner and Knowland touch the vital spot. It is less a question of a truce in Korea than it is of the independent sovereignty of the U.S. It becomes clearer that the "liberals" are more interested in getting a UN truce than a real truce without the UN. What they obviously want is the U.S. handcuffed, by an act of truce agreement, to an internationalist body in which Soviet Russia, Communist China and other nations can work their will on America.

State Department Story: The name of a new candidate to be successor to Secretary John Foster Dulles has just been put into circulation. The name is that of Undersecretary Walter Bedell ("Beedle") Smith. Who has launched this tentative? Truman-Acheson holdovers in the top ranks of the State Department who apparently regard Smith as one of their own and as their protector against Capitol Hill leaders who want to oust them. It is rumored that there took place some extended discussion of this candidacy recently at a Washington social gathering at which "Beedle" Smith was present. Much was said about Dulles' vicissitudes, and belief was expressed that Dulles might not last long. When some present suggested that "Beedle" Smith might be a logical candidate for the job, the Undersecretary reportedly indicated that he might be available.

These reported remarks, relayed among informed diplomatic circles in the past ten days, have caused much discussion in Washington. While Ike and "Beedle" are old comrades, would the President do this

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in face of growing discontent on Capitol Hill against Smith, who is regarded as a "Truman holdover"? A number of GOP Senators have recently remarked in private that they would have opposed the nomination of "Beedle" Smith to the post of Undersecretary three months ago, had it not been the very opening of the new Administration and had not harmony called for it. As the months have gone by, their discontent has risen and a number of legislators now wish they had blocked the appointment.

This sentiment has risen particularly because it is felt that Smith has failed to cooperate wholeheartedly with Mr. Scott McLeod, the new and vigorous Director of Security in the State Department. (McLeod had been aide to the powerful Senator Styles Bridges, President pro-tem of the Senate.) Some circles on Capitol Hill have noted that a smear campaign in the "liberal" press has started against McLeod (who is trying to clean out many holdovers in State Department) and they wonder if the campaign isn't encouraged by "Beedle" Smith's entourage.

In any case, many Senators, while critical of Secretary Dulles, believe him a much better and sounder man than "Beedle" Smith. They note with approval Secretary Dulles' very sensible review of the Near Eastern situation this week on his return to Washington. They place the blame for the continuance in the State Department of various Truman-Acheson holdovers on the Undersecretary rather than on Dulles. And if a clique of these friends of Smith are going to push for his elevation to Dulles' post, they will have to reckon with forces on Capitol Hill.

Bricker Amendment: The fight for Senator Bricker's measure to protect the sovereignty of the U.S. goes on. In the forefront, Mr. Frank Holman, past President of the American Bar Association, has been doing an educational job on Capitol Hill which has inspired much admiration. Holman, with his profound knowledge of constitutional and international law, is able to reveal vividly to the public gaze many dangers to Americans from international treaties.

The *Chicago Tribune* reports one of the illustrations used by Holman. "Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones get on a plane at Seattle. Mr. Smith's ticket is to Bellingham, Washington. Mr. Jones' ticket is to Vancouver, British Columbia, in Canada. The plane crashes in Mt. Vernon, Washington, and both men are killed. Mr. Smith's widow can bring a damage suit and get a jury trial. Mr. Jones' widow cannot. The Warsaw convention denies her a jury trial and the most she can collect is 125,000 French francs, currently about $8,300, although Mrs. Smith might be awarded $100,000 by a jury." Mr. Jones' widow was unlucky because he bought an international ticket, subject to the Warsaw convention, a treaty relating to international transportation.

Mr. Holman says that the UN crowd have readied about 300 treaties which they hope to force upon the American people, including the famous so-called human rights treaty, the genocide or racial extermination treaty, etc. Such proposals have aroused so much opposition in America that Secretary of State Dulles has pledged the Eisenhower Administration not to push for their ratification. Meanwhile, the International Labor Office in Geneva, Switzerland, has several score more which concern the "rights of labor" and social security and which would impinge on many of our local statutes. Mr. W. L. McGrath, an American businessman who has served as a business representative on the ILO, says that the Geneva organization has concealed in these proposed treaties many provisions which would promote socialism.

Holman claims that under the so-called human rights covenant, the U.S. might have to face the possibility that the notorious Harry Bridges, coast labor leader, could become President of the United States. The rights covenant says "Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country." Under the Constitution, Bridges, an Australian naturalized citizen of the U.S., could not be named President, nor Vice President. And as for our present immigration laws, they would become internationally illegal under the UN rights declaration through the provision: "Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

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"Liberals" and Communists: The Communist Party of the U.S. has taken a long step towards lining up with the "liberals" in this country (and vice versa, one may remark). Sharp observers have long stressed this identity and warned that the two elements were not so far apart as they seemed or professed to be. But, on May 31, the *Daily Worker* ran an article which some experts here regard as very friendly support of the Americans for Democratic Action for the first time. The Communist daily paper intimated that the ADA has turned away from anti-Communism and is now hitting the trail in the "right direction", which is of course the farthest "left direction". Also, the prominent coverage given to Senator Lehman's speech to the ADA, attacking McCarthyism, is considered very significant.

The ADA (of which Lehman is a leader) has been often classified by most political scientists as socialist, but not pro-Communist. It has been quite a power in the Democratic Party through the intelligentsia and infiltration of the Democratic Administrations. However, despite its professed anti-Communism, the ADA for some years has come to support positions identical with the Communists — such as its move to repeal the Smith anti-subversive Act (on which the Communist party leaders were convicted and sent to jail). Also, the ADA has waged the same vicious campaign against Senator McCarthy as the Communist Party.

Senator Lehman, however innocently, now seems particularly close to the Communist line in his extravagant attacks on what he calls "McCarthyism". In fact, some remark that it is not "McCarthyism" which is the real danger today — it is "Lehmanism".

Air Force: From London sources we learn confirmation of reports (first broken in this column) that the British military are all for the American Air Force plans for world defense by strategic air power. The British military (including Churchill) are "browned off" with NATO and deem the ground defense of Europe wasteful and futile. An across-the-water informant tells us that the British military want to concentrate on air power and have urged the U.S. to do likewise. And they have no faith in strategic bombing from carriers (as Admiral Radford advocates). The Navy, the British say, should be limited to keeping the sea lanes open.

Our British source relates a story told by one of the British military men who tried to sell the air strategy to the retiring U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (headed by Omar Bradley, whom Radford has just replaced). Members of the Bradley team strenuously turned down the British suggestions, one of our generals remarking, "Why, if we took your point of view, that would constitute a big victory for the air-minded advisers of Herbert Hoover and Senator Taft."

Labor Danger: A highly perilous situation in the labor field has just been explored by the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. Members declare that this situation is a threat to the national security of the country, after studying the labor organization of the communications industry. The American Communications Association, which is the bargaining agent for the Western Union Telegraph Company employers as well as for RCA on the two coasts, was expelled from the CIO several years ago, as a Communist-infiltrated union.

The subcommittee learned that telegraph wires to all the big cities of the U.S. run through the Western Union building in New York City and that members of this left-wing union handle messages of all kinds, many of them governmental in nature, some in military or naval codes, according to evidence presented at the committee hearings. Now this particular union is trying to get control of the employees of the American Cable and Radio Company. The Senate committee gave a long list of prominent military centers and forts in this country where circuits are accessible to members of this union. Senators are gravely pondering the situation, seeking emergency legislation which could put an end to it, and have conferred with the National Labor Relations Board about such proposed measures.

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The People's Pottage, by Garet Garrett. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. $3.00. Reviewed by Frank Chodorov.

The story of the decline of a nation is interesting only in retrospect. To those who have seen it happen, and have been helpless participants in the process of decline, the record of how it occurred makes sorry reading. All the more so when the record is supported with irrefutable evidence and cogent logic. That is to say, Garet Garrett's *The People's Pottage* will prove of inestimable value to the historian of the next century, as source material; but to us, or those who remember, it is like a clinical account of the illness and death of a dear friend. It could well have been entitled *How the American Republic Passed Away.*

In 1938, Garrett wrote a monograph which he called *The Revolution Was.* In those days there were prophets who predicted that the New Deal, then in its heyday, was the entering wedge of a new philosophy that would ultimately destroy the American tradition and usher in an era of absolutism. Some said that Mr. Roosevelt was the Kerensky for the coming American Stalin. Garrett's thesis was that the revolution had already taken place, and adduced detailed proof to support his point. He showed that the incidence of power had shifted from the people to the State, all in approved legal fashion; a shifting of the incidence of power, whether done legally or by force, is the essence of a revolution. We who lived through it did not recognize the advent of the revolution simply because the language of the Republic was retained, and its forms were assiduously adhered to, even while it was being undermined. In seriatim form, Garrett lists and explains the deadening drugs that were administered to the heart of the Republic without apparently affecting its body. (Incidentally, this monograph, even though it ultimately enjoyed a large sale, had difficulty in finding a publisher.)

In 1951, Garrett put out another pamphlet, called *Ex America.* This is a supplementary account of the post-revolutionary deterioration. It deals mainly with the inflationary measures by which the regime maintained itself, and the effect of these measures on the mental attitude of the people. The illusion of prosperity that was produced by the manufacture of money and the profusion of subsidies seduced the people into acceptance of the new order and obliterated from their memory the tradition of freedom.

Finally, last year came Garrett's *Rise of Empire.* Its theme is set in the opening sentence — "We have crossed the boundary that lies between Republic and Empire." The restraints on political power which distinguish a republic from an empire, he points out with clarity, have all but vanished; the Constitution has been repeatedly circumvented by both interpretation and outright disregard, and the famous "checks and balances" have been lost in the maze of Bureaucratic Government. Congress is helpless in the new setup, the Supreme Court is made obsequious to the Executive by the process of replacing retiring "reactionaries" with complacent jurists, and as a result of our foreign adventures the military is in the ascendancy. Like Rome, which retained the fiction of a Republic under the Caesars, the United States is an empire in all but name.

The three pamphlets have now been put together in covers by that valiant publisher out in Caldwell, Idaho, James H. Gipson. *The People's Pottage* will probably not achieve a place on any "best seller" list because it is too prodigal with unpleasant truth. But, the fact that there is one publisher in America who is willing to risk his money on an essentially patriotic book indicates that, despite Garrett's pessimism, there are men who won't give up. Freedom is a perennial.

"The people know", says Garrett in closing, "they can have their Republic back if they want it enough to fight for it and to pay the price. The only point is that no leader has yet appeared with the courage to make them choose." If enough good Americans read this book and take it to heart, the leader will not long be wanting.

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